

Mr. Aca Singer, President of Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia.

Protestant

Dr. Peter Kuzmic, President, Council of Evangelical Churches in Croatia.●

#### RESTORATION OF LITHUANIA'S INDEPENDENCE

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, on February 6 of this year, in the Divine Providence Church, in Southfield, Michigan, several hundred Lithuanian Americans will gather to mark the tenth anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's independence. Joined by Lithuania's ambassador to the United States, His Excellency, Stasys Sakalauskas, they will be celebrating their nation's original, modern independence day, February 16, 1918, as well as the events of March 1, 1990, the date on which Lithuania was finally and irrevocably released from the grip of Soviet communism.

Michigan's Lithuanian-American community also will celebrate the perseverance and sacrifice of their people, which enabled them to achieve the freedom they now enjoy.

I have reviewed the bare facts before: On March 11, 1990, the newly elected Lithuanian Parliament, fulfilling its electoral mandate from the people of Lithuania, declared the restoration of Lithuania's independence and the establishment of a democratic state. This marked a great moment for Lithuania and for lovers of freedom around the globe.

The people of Lithuania endured 51 years of oppressive foreign occupation. Operating under cover of the infamous Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, Soviet troops marched into Lithuania, beginning an occupation characterized by communist dictatorship and cultural genocide.

Even in the face of this oppression, the Lithuanian people were not defeated. They assisted their oppressors and kept their culture, their faith and their dream of independence very much alive even during the hardest times.

The people of Lithuania were even able to mobilize and sustain a non-violent movement for social and political change, a movement which came to be known as Sajudis. This people's movement helped guarantee a peaceful transition to independence through full participation in democratic elections on February 24, 1990.

Unfortunately, as is so often the case, peace and freedom had to be purchased again and again. In January of 1991, ten months after restoration of independence, the people and government of Lithuania faced a bloody assault by foreign troops intent on overthrowing their democratic institutions. Lithuanians withstood this assault, maintaining their independence and their democracy. Their successful use of non-violent resistance to an oppressive regime is an inspiration to all.

Lithuania's integration into the international community has been

swift and sure. On September 17, 1991, the reborn nation became a member of the United Nations and is a signatory to a number of its organizations and other international agreements. It also is a member of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Council of Europe.

Lithuania is an associate member of the European Union, has applied for NATO membership and is currently negotiating for membership in the WTO, OECD and other Western organizations.

The United States established diplomatic relations with Lithuania on July 28, 1992. But our nation never really broke with the government and people of Lithuania. The United States never recognized the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the U.S.S.R., and views the present Government of Lithuania as a legal continuation of the inter-war republic. Indeed, for over fifty years the United States maintained a bipartisan consensus that our nation would refuse to recognize the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the former Soviet Union.

America's relations with Lithuania continue to be strong, friendly and mutually beneficial. Lithuania has enjoyed Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) treatment with the United States since December, 1991. Through 1996, the United States has committed over \$100 million to Lithuania's economic and political transformation and to address humanitarian needs. In 1994, the United States and Lithuania signed an agreement of bilateral trade and intellectual property protection, and in 1997 a bilateral investment treaty.

In 1998 the United States and Lithuania signed The Baltic Charter Partnership. That charter recalls the history of American relations with the area and underscores our "real, profound, and enduring" interest in the security and independence of the three Baltic states. As the Charter also notes, our interest in a Europe whole and free will not be ensured until Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are secure.

Mr. President, I commend the people of Lithuania for their courage and perseverance in using peaceful means to regain their independence. I pledge to work with my colleagues to continue working to secure the freedom and independence of Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors, and I join with the people of Lithuania as they celebrate their independence.●

#### RECOGNITION OF THE NACHES VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP CLASS

● Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, as the Senate prepares to debate the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the coming weeks, one of the topics we will no doubt address is this issue of school safety.

I want to recognize the extraordinary efforts of a group of students and

teachers in eastern Washington in addressing violent crime in their community and making their school a safer place for all students. The Leadership Class at Naches Valley High School has done an excellent job at incorporating creative solutions and programs to curb gang activity and encourage fellow students to do well in school. For their efforts, I am presenting these students and their teacher, Mr. Sanford Jetton with my "Innovation in Education" award.

Naches Valley is a rural school district at the foot of the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. For years, Naches Valley High School reflected the small community values with little conflict between students. In 1996, it discovered it was not immune from the problems that are common-place in most large urban schools—gangs, drugs, depression, crime, to name a few.

When the high school had its first incident of gang violence, students in the Leadership class were both frightened and angry. While such a reaction would be expected, their response was anything but typical. Not only did the students confront the gang members, challenging them to be positive contributors to the school atmosphere, but they proactively worked with their principal, their Leadership teacher Sanford Jetton, the Mayor, and the deputies from the sheriff's department to address the problem.

The students helped write a town ordinance which declared the local park to be part of the school grounds for an hour before and an hour after school, or whenever that park is being used for school activities. This allows for disruptive students to be dealt with both by law enforcement and the school's own "zero tolerance" gang policy.

As a result of this direct intervention, most of the gang members relinquished that affiliation and eventually graduated from Naches. In addition, there have been no further incidences of gang violence at Naches Valley High School since 1996.

The Leadership class did not stop with the problem of gang violence. Its members looked for innovative ways to promote drug and violence prevention through school and community service. The list of student-initiated accomplishments is quite impressive:

The class established a Student Accountability Board (S.A.B.) which provides alternative consequences for students pulled over by the sheriff's office for traffic violations. The S.A.B. has resulted in a 50 percent reduction in traffic citations. Seat belt use among students has also risen from 63 percent in 1997 to 93 percent in 1999.

Working with the University of Washington, the class prepared a suicide awareness program which has since spread to six other schools.

The class initiated a "Student Sharing Solutions" program which teams up schools throughout the Yakima Valley for such events as a countryside graffiti paint-out.